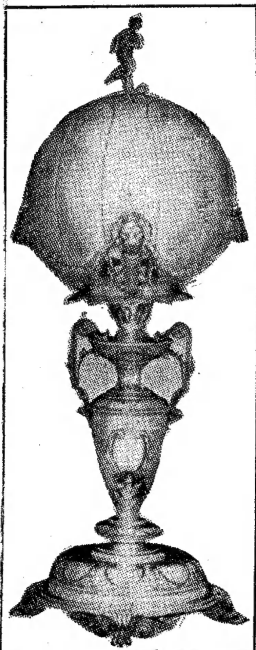


WANDERERS CRASH IN THE MUD



Youth hope

WITH Wycombe Wanderers out of action until Saturday, the spotlight falls on the club's youth team tomorrow (Wednesday) night when they entertain St Albans City in the Berger Paints Isthmian Youth Cup.

This will be the Blues' penultimate Section A game of the competition and it is one of their most vital. If they win, they stand a great chance of qualifying for the finals. Three clubs qualify and both Slough and Southall are certain of places in the finals.

Wanderers are battling it out with Hendon for the third place and victory at Loakes Park would stand them in good stead for their final game at St Albans in the near future. Wycombe, represented by Flackwell Heath Under 18's, have improved steadily this season and are now playing some highly attractive football that usually produces a hatful of goals.

As Slough are playing Winsford in the FA Trophy tomorrow, the Blues senior team has no game tonight (Tuesday) and their opponents on Saturday have still not been decided.

If Slough win or lose at Winsford they will entertain Wanderers in the twice postponed Berks and Bucks quarter final tie. But if the game is drawn or called off due to the weather, Wanderers will have to arrange another fixture.

That could be Walthamstow at home but there again, Avenue are involved in the FA Trophy tonight and a draw or postponement could put Saturday's game in jeopardy. Wycombe's eventual fixture for Saturday will be in Friday's Bucks Free Press.

TRAILING 2-0 until the 79th minute, Wycombe Wanderers staged a spirited comeback at Goole on Saturday. But it was not enough to keep their F.A. Trophy hopes alive and this defeat means they have once again failed to reach the third round.

In atrocious conditions of cold, rain and mud which put an end to most other games, Wycombe's rally took them to the brink of a replay. There were two or three chances for that vital equalising goal but in the end, it was too late to save them. The damage had already been done by a 41st minute penalty from Chris Jackson and a goal by Mally Thompson in the 64th minute.

Wanderers fans may well point to the muddy quagmire of a pitch as a primary reason for defeat. Bury referee K. Kiely had two inspections before deciding the game should go on — mainly to avoid disappointing the 500 or so travellers from High Wycombe.

The pitch certainly ruined the Blues normal game, but in my view, Goole were a stronger side all-round and would have won even if the conditions had been better. Wycombe just didn't possess sufficient power in midfield and upfront.

It was the midfield battle that decided the match. Led by the balding Tony 'Kojak' Taylor, Goole overpowered their opponents in the middle with greater strength. Taylor was man of the match and his work rate stood out like a beacon. Town also adopted the more sensible tactics on the day. Whereas Wanderers stuck to their

Goole Town 2, Wycombe Wanderers 1 REPORT BY STUART EARP

normal short game approach, Goole avoided the midfield morass by hitting long passes to the dangerous Charlie Green and Thompson.

If there was one overriding difference between the two sides though, it was determination. Goole, harder and stronger, were repeatedly first to the ball and their spirit, so vital on a day like Saturday, was decisive. Had Wycombe found similar appetite for the game earlier, it might have been very different.

HARRIS OUT

Wycombe's cause was not helped by the absence of Derek Harris, who missed the trip because of flu. This meant that Roger Day was substitute and I've no doubt manager John Reardon would have preferred a more attacking number 12, especially in the closing stages to relieve the flagging Tony Horseman. This certainly wasn't a day for lightweight. Apart from 'Bodger', Graham Mackenzie was never happy while the mud blunted the Blues most potent force — Mick Hollifield.

It was Mick who seemed to have given his side the lead after 21 minutes, but the effort was ruled out for offside. How different it might have been if the 'goal' had been allowed to stand.

Before that, play had been pretty even with both sides struggling to keep their feet on an impossible surface. Taylor's long left-foot crosses kept Wycombe's defence busy but the disallowed goal acted as a body blow to the Blues. Hollifield did remarkably well to beat Dave Williams and his shot from 20 yards went in-off the far post. Whether anyone was interfering with play is doubtful but up went the flag and that was that.

Williams was booked for a shoulder charge of Mackenzie and from the free kick Keith Mead headed home after the whistle had gone for another offence.

Gradually Goole stamped a firm grip on the game and Jackson almost scored when his low shot curled wide with Peter Spittle unsighted. Then in the 36th minute Green wormed his way through inside the box but delayed his shot and allowed Spittle to come out and dive bravely at the striker's feet. Peter followed that with a fine catch from Green's dangerous cross.

PENALTY

But there was nothing he could do about Goole's 41st minute goal from the penalty spot. Green gathered the ball inside the box and as Alan Phillips came in to tackle, Green went tumbling. It looked a hefty challenge but in these conditions any penalties are debatable. Jackson smashed home the spot kick.

Goole at home

GOOLE Town, narrow 2-1 winners over Wycombe on Saturday, must fancy their chances of reaching the last eight of the competition after Monday's third round draw. Goole play Merthyr Tydfil at home and should prove too strong for the lone survivors from the Southern League Division One North.

Enfield, who drew 1-1 at Wigan on Saturday with Tony Bass scoring his 28th goal of the season, will play either Leatherhead or Dart-

ford away in the next round if they win the replay tonight (Tuesday).

Last year's conquerors of Wycombe, Runcorn, will be at home to Tooting or Lancaster if they beat Boston while the winners of the Slough v Winsford tie are at home to Nuneaton or Bangor. It was Bangor who put out holders Scarborough in the last round.

Third round matches are on February 25.

Goole's superiority in midfield continued into the second half. Wycombe's short passing game foundered in the mud and seldom did they test the lack of pace in the home defence.

Wanderers went close with isolated attacks notably when Horseman's cross beat the defence but no-one was there to knock the ball home. It was during one of the Blues' better spells that Goole grabbed the second goal. Taylor inevitably was the architect with a lovely snippet of skill. He flicked the ball up and volleyed a high ball towards the box. Bob Davies came across but misjudged the flight of the ball and then slipped. This left Thompson free to hammer a shot past the helpless Spittle.

To their credit, Wycombe pulled out all the stops after that reverse. Tom Wilson brought down John Priestley on the edge of the box and keeper Barry White took no chances with Horseman's clever free kick, tipping the ball over for a corner.

Wycombe's pressure was rewarded in the 79th minute. Paul Birdseye, who did well considering he was suffering from the after-effects of flu, sent a long throw to the near post where Thompson involuntarily headed across the goal. Evans sent in a shot that was going wide but Trevor Whiteley stuck out a boot to deflect the ball past White.

Roared on by some excellent support, Wanderers staged a fighting recovery in the remaining minutes. Wilson cleared after Kennedy had beaten White but the best chance came with two minutes left. Hollifield ran through inside the box and his shot struck White and rolled towards the line. All it needed was someone in the right place at the right time to knock it home. As it was, White had time to dive on the ball a second time.

Green was booked for time wasting in the closing seconds and Wanderers were still pressing when the final whistle signalled the end of the Trophy hopes for another year.

GOOLE: B. White; C. Jackson, D. Jennings, T. Wilson, D. Williams; T. Whiteley, N. Sellers, T. Taylor; C. Green, M. Thompson, J. Kelly. Sub. M. Lloyd (not used).

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies; G. Mackenzie, J. Priestley, H. Kennedy; D. Evans, A. Horseman, M. Hollifield. Sub. R. Day (not used).

Referee: K. Kiely (Bury).

Half-time: 1-0. Goalscorers, Goole — Jackson, pen. (21), Thompson (64). Wycombe — Whiteley, o.g. (79).

Official attendance: 1,156.